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New South

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The Churches Speak

SOUTHERN churches and church people have long played an important role in the effort to secure equal rights for all people in the region. The Southern Regional Council itself owes a large debt of gratitude to the various faiths and denominations that have supported its program.

During the past two years, in which the question of human and civil rights has become a leading national issue, religious groups in the South have shown a growing willingness to take a positive stand for a broader democracy. Following are some excerpts from statements issued by religious and church bodies — all but one of them Southern. Most of the statements were made within the past year, and none dates back further than 1947. They are broken down for convenience under three general headings — Safety of the Person, Citizenship and Its Privileges, and Equality of Opportunity.

This can only be regarded as a sampling; we have not attempted a complete summary of Southern church pronouncements in the field of human rights.

SAFETY OF THE PERSON

Southern Baptist Convention: "We shall think of the Negro as a person and treat him accordingly. . . We shall protest against injustice and indignities against Negroes, as we do in the case of people of our own race, whenever and wherever we meet them."

North Georgia Conference, The Methodist Church: "It is . . . patent to all that prejudice and race hatred are a constant threat to law and order and the fruitful source of acts of violence and the detestable crime of lynching."

New Orleans Unit, Catholic Committee of the South: "As Catholics we know that incitement to ill will and hatred is contrary to the Christian principles of justice and charity, a grave violation of the great Commandment: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' "

Methodist Ministers' Association of Atlanta: "We are scandalized at the Klan's desecration of the Cross of Christ. . . We condemn as un-Christian the Klan's constant stirring of prejudice and hate. . . We call on the City of Atlanta, the County of Fulton, the State of Georgia to pass legislation prohibiting the parading of any group under the cover of masks."

Committee on Christian Relations, The Presbyterian Church in the United States: "That since our American Congress has seen fit to maintain its Committee on un-American Activities, the Assembly call upon this Committee to be no less concerned to investigate and expose the un-Americanism of organizations like the Columbians and the Ku Klux Klan — which are definitely akin to fascism — than it is to expose organizations whose subversive activities stem from their Communist character."

Commission on Justice and Peace, Central Conference of American Rabbis: "The essence of justice is the exercise of community responsibility. Yet where local authority neglects or fails to act, the federal government should — and must — have the power and authority to act vigorously."

Woman's Society of Christian Service, Southeastern Jurisdiction, The Methodist Church: Recommended "that Methodist women work for federal and state legislation to guarantee civil rights to the peoples of this nation."

Georgia Council of Church Women: "Our policemen must not be members of organizations which spread fear and terror . . . There is no room in a democratic society for those who, wearing hoods and burning crosses, practice hatred and violence. . . ."

Executive Committee, Virginia Council of Churches: Recommended "that the citizens and officials of Virginia, while deeply grateful for the record of our state in having no lynching in our borders since the passage of the anti-lynching law 20 years ago, ever be on the alert to prevent the development of any situation which might eventuate in the crime of lynching."

CITIZENSHIP AND ITS PRIVILEGES

Synod of South Carolina, The Presbyterian Church in the U. S.: "America cannot be a white oligarchy in which the Negro is required to abide by rules which he had no hand in formulating."

Commission on Justice and Peace, Central Conference of American Rabbis: "We urge the elimination of all disfranchising techniques, whether discriminatory or potentially discriminatory. Consequently we endorse Federal action to abolish poll taxes. . . Thoroughgoing protection of the rights of suffrage calls for recognition by the several states of their moral responsibility to assure these rights to all citizens and state action in accordance therewith."

Social Service Commission, Southern Baptist Convention: "We believe in democracy, according to which equal political rights are granted to all citizens on a common basis of qualification. The exclusive rule of one race in a multi-racial democracy, without regard to the right of other races to participate in the processes of self-government under a common law, is no more justifiable than the rule of one political party without regard to the rights of other political parties to participation in the processes of self-government under a common law."

North Georgia Conference, The Methodist Church: "Resolved, that we appeal to our Methodist people and to all citizens to discourage by every possible means the injection of race or class prejudice into political campaigns."

Executive Committee, Virginia Council of Churches: Recommended "that qualifications for voting or service in connection with elections be set and administered without discrimination because of race, creed, or color . . . that Negro citizens be appointed to school boards and to boards of any other political, public, civic, or social service agency on the same basis of merit as other citizens."

Georgia Council of Church Women: "We must oppose any and all actions which deny the rights of citizenship."

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Catholic Committee of the South: "The term 'Southern Tradition' is misused and dishonored when it is employed to justify a continued state of unjust discrimination against the Negro laborer and privation of the Negro of the opportunity for higher education and professional training. . . ."

Committee on Christian Relations, The Presbyterian Church in the U. S.: "That the Assembly go on record as condemning all organizations and individuals in our country whose aim and purpose is to hinder any American minorities in the exercise of their civil rights, or that seek to deny such rights to any groups or individuals because of their race, creed, class, or color."

Southern Baptist Convention: "We shall be willing for the Negro to enjoy the rights granted to him under the Constitution of the United States, including the right . . . to secure a just share of the benefits of educational and other funds, and to receive equal service for equal payment on public carriers and conveniences."

Commission on Justice and Peace, Central Conference of American Rabbis: "A broad continuing program of public enlighten-

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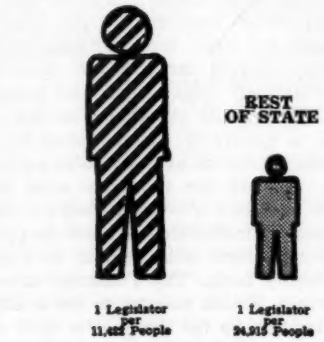
Lopsided Legislatures

I. Alabama



*Barbour, Bibb, Bullock, Butler, Cherokee, Clarke, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Dallas, Elmore, Greene, Hale, Henry, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Pike, Sumter, Tallapoosa, Washington, Wilcox.

ALABAMA'S legislature is a striking example of one of the South's chief stumbling blocks. The South rejoices in the fact that it is getting new industries, more urban centers, and a healthier balance between farming and manufacturing. But while we all work for a modern economy, our political machinery creaks on at a pace set half a century ago.

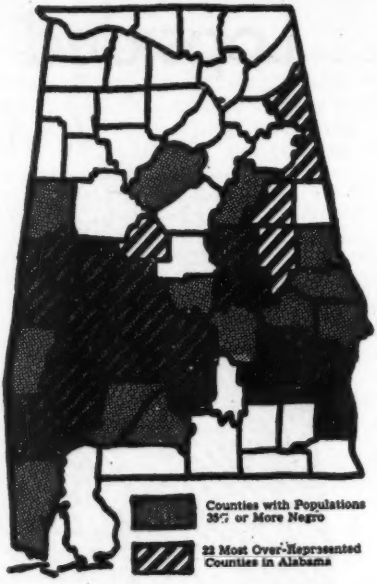
It was in 1901 that Alabama's present apportionment of state legislators was made. Since then there has been only one change — brought about by the creation of a new county in 1903 — despite major shifts in population and in the economic life of the State.

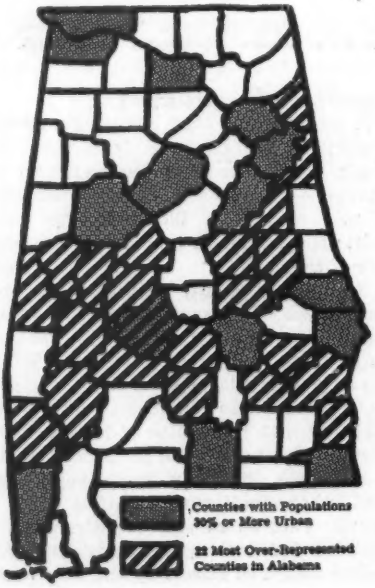
Age is not the only liability of the present system of apportionment. It was unequal from the beginning. For example, in 1901 one senator was allotted to Wilcox County, with a largely rural population of 35,631, and one to Jefferson County, with a largely urban population of 140,420. Other districts containing large urban populations were similarly under-represented and other small rural districts were favored. Thus at the start a pattern was set that has led to the gross inequality which exists today, as shown by the map above.

This is the first of a series of articles on unequal representation in Southern legislatures. Others will appear in NEW SOUTH *during the coming months. The figures used in this article were drawn primarily from two sources: the United States Census, and* THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN ALABAMA — LEGISLATIVE APPORTIONMENT *by Dr. Hallie Farmer, published by the Bureau of Public Administration, University of Alabama.*

According to the 1940 census, an exact ratio of legislators to population in Alabama would be one per 20,092 people. Using this as a norm, we find that 43 counties out of the total of 67 are over-represented to a greater or lesser degree. For purposes of comparison, the 22 most over-represented counties were lumped together. This furnishes a useful division of the State into that one-third of its counties most clearly and significantly favored by apportionment, and the remainder of the State.

A glance at the map will show how the favored counties cluster together. A majority of them are in south central Alabama. With few exceptions, they are marked by large land holdings, a high tenancy rate, a large Negro population, and relatively little urban and industrial life. The rest of the State, on the other hand, is generally characterized by very different patterns of population and economy. In both the Piedmont area to the north and the wiregrass country in the southeast, landholding is more democratically organized, with greater strength in the family farm. The Piedmont area and the Piney Woods country in the southwest also contain by far the greater part of the State's mineral wealth and industrial development.





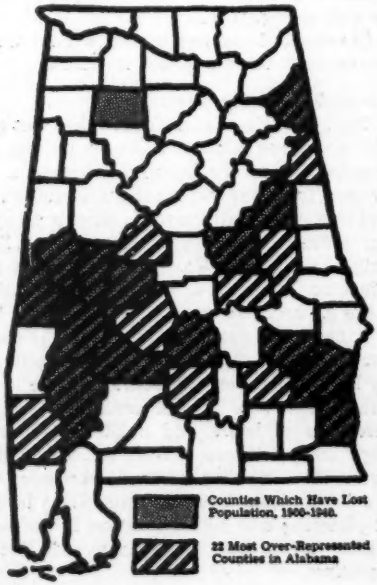
Let us look at some comparative figures. Taken as a group, our 22 over-represented counties have 20% of the State's population and 36% of the legislators; the rest of the State has 80% of the people and 64% of the legislators. Add to this the fact that over half the population in the over-represented counties, as a whole, is Negro, as contrasted with 29% in the rest of the State. If the heretofore disfranchised (and one might justly say unrepresented) Negro citizens were subtracted, the disproportion would be much greater.

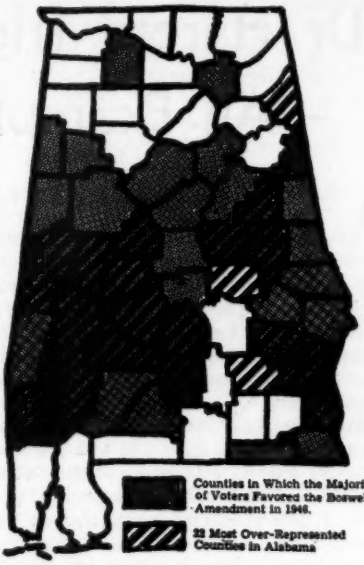
Who lives in the over-represented area? First of all, they are mostly rural people; only 9.6% of the people in our 22 counties are urban, while in the rest of the State 35.5% are urban. Secondly, they make their living at farming; 62% of them are employed in agriculture, as compared to 33% in the remaining counties. Though tenancy is high throughout the State, more of them are tenant farmers than in other counties; in the over-represented area, 68% of the farms are operated by tenants, as compared with 55% in the rest of the State. Finally, the average education is less in the 22 over-represented counties; there, 58% of the people twenty-five years

or older have completed at least five grades of school, whereas in the rest of the State this figure stands at 72%.

The historical reasons for this unequal representation are easy to see. It was first established at a time when south central Alabama was economically as well as politically dominant in the State — when the large plantation owners of southern Alabama were an unchallenged aristocracy. The pattern was continued at the beginning of this century partly as a defense of "white supremacy" and partly as a protection of the planters' interests in the face of expanding industrial centers.

Just how important this last reason is can be seen by a glance at population shifts during the last 45 years, in which apportionment has remained untouched. Between 1900 and 1940, fifteen counties lost population. Of the fifteen, all but one are among the 22 over-represented counties. The average loss for the 22 counties was 1,116 people each, as compared with an average gain for the rest of the State of 11,332 per county. The figures from the 1940 Census are the latest complete data available. More recent estimates, reflecting the heavy migration from farms to cities during and after the war, show only that this trend has been speeded up.





Thus the 1901 apportionment, unequal at the outset, has become steadily more so. The growth of Alabama's urban centers — part and parcel of the welcome industrialization — has meant that more and more people in the State have lost any semblance of equal representation in the legislature.

What are the effects of this unequal system on the political life of the State? A good indication was the adoption in 1946 of the Boswell Amendment to the state constitution. This amendment, recently declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court, gave arbitrary power to registrars to declare the fitness of a citizen to vote; in purpose and in practice, it was aimed at denying the ballot to Negroes. Among our over-represented counties, a majority of the voters in 19 out of the 22 voted for the amendment. Of the remaining 45 counties, a majority of the voters in only 22 counties voted for it. The popular vote is perhaps more revealing. In the 22 over-represented counties, 70% of those voting favored the Boswell Amendment, as against 54% in the rest of the State. Let us keep in mind that this area, whose dominant attitude is shown so clearly by the Boswell vote, wields a large balance of power in the legislature,

(Continued on page 7)

Dr. Harold Trigg's Appointment — An Example for the South

THE appointment of Dr. Harold L. Trigg to the North Carolina Board of Education is a memorable contribution to Southern progress. The appointment marks the first time in at least half a century that a Negro citizen has been named to this position by a Southern governor.

Members and friends of the Southern Regional Council rejoice doubly in the appointment. Dr. Trigg's vision, wide knowledge, and deep interest in human relations are well known in this organization. As Associate Director of the Council in 1946 and 1947 and in his present position of vice president, he has given generously of his energy and leadership.

Governor Scott has served North Carolina well by this appointment. It is greatly to be hoped that other Southern States may soon act as wisely in the interest of all their citizens.

Following are some editorial comments on Dr. Trigg's appointment:

Raleigh News and Observer

The appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the General Assembly of a Negro as one of the 10 appointed members of the State Board of Education was a manifestation of the North Carolina way of dealing with the racial question. . . Dr. Trigg's qualifications for service on the Board are beyond question. . .

Asheville Citizen-Times

Governor Scott's appointment of Dr. H. L. Trigg as a member of the Board of Education was approved by the General Assembly without question; it will be approved by the people as a deserved and proper, though long-delayed, recognition of the State's Negro citizens.

Dr. Trigg, President of St. Augustine College in Raleigh, is the first Negro member of the Board in the history of North Carolina education. Because of his wide experience as a teacher in the State, and his consequent knowledge of educational problems, in general and as they apply to his race, it seems to be the unanimous agreement that Dr. Trigg is admirably qualified for useful membership on the State Board of Education. . .

Early in his administration, Governor Scott said he proposed to give Negroes larger representation on State boards and commissions. It is a policy supported by justice and common sense in the mobilization of the people's talents and energies for tasks that affect the destiny of all North Carolinians.

Norfolk Journal and Guide

Governor Scott's appointment of Dr. Harold L. Trigg . . . is significant for many reasons. (1) It places a Negro in an official position to make a contribution to the cause of education in his State which needs to be made, but which could not be made otherwise. (2) It marks a truly great forward step in education in race relations in North Carolina. (3) It proves that the government of North Carolina, while adhering to the doctrine of state rights, also believes that it has certain responsibilities as well as rights. . .

Governor Scott has blazed a new trail for other Southern States to follow.

Greensboro Daily News

The *Daily News* is delighted that Governor Scott has named a Negro citizen to membership on the Board of Education.

Patently no one can speak authoritatively and knowledgefully for this large group of our citizens save one of its own. . . Dr. Trigg as a North Carolina citizen, as an educator, and as a spokesman for the large group of fellow citizens of whom he is a member, qualifies. We are confident our educational progress will be spurred by his presence on the board and the contribution which he will make in intelligence, in guidance, and in direction. Our hope is that Negro representation on the board of education is the forerunner of similar representation at other state levels of planning and administration in matters which affect all the citizens of North Carolina.

The Churches Speak

(*Continued from page 2*)

ment and information is necessary and desirable to condition the public mind to a fuller appreciation of the meaning of equal opportunity; this is a long term approach. To implement and accelerate this process legislative action must be taken, for it not only serves as an educative device but immediately eliminates to some extent discrimination in actual practice."

Department of Christian Social Relations, Diocese of Upper S. C., The Protestant Episcopal Church: "We will have the conviction that every person has the right to a secure and happy home life, to education, to genuine economic opportunity, to participate to the fullest in civic life, to wholesome recreation, to sound health, in short, to all things which give him an opportunity to achieve his ultimate destiny as a child of God."

Executive Committee, Virginia Council of Churches: "Since racial segregation in public carriers is a social and economic waste and is undemocratic in principle, and in view of the evidence that the traditional policy of separate but equal accommodations has proven a failure in fact, we recommend that racial segregation on common carriers and in public waiting rooms be immediately abolished. . . Regarding industrial and service occupations, we recommend . . . that all people be safe-guarded in their opportunity to be employed at their greatest skill and for compensation equal to that of people already engaged in similar work."

Georgia Council of Church Women: "Limited as opportunities are for our white children, our Negro children are even more shamefully treated. Their schools are the poorest of the poor. Their teachers have been the most underpaid. We cannot pretend to believe in justice and allow such inequality to continue."

Woman's Society of Christian Service, Southeastern Jurisdiction, The Methodist Church: " . . . we recommend that we work to implement the Supreme Court ruling relative to admission of all individuals, regardless of race or creed, to educational institutions for graduate training in our schools, both church and state controlled . . . that every effort be made to make the South, the nation as a while and the world know that Christian women of the South oppose any effort, political or otherwise, to block progressive moves toward the achievement of civil rights for all people in this nation, including millions of citizens in this Southland."

Lopsided Legislatures

(*Continued from page 5*)

thanks to its disproportionate representation.

Surely, it may be asked, the majority of the people of Alabama are not content with this outmoded and unequal system of representation? The answer is that they probably are not. But so far all attempts to secure reapportionment have failed. The state constitution provides that apportionment shall be examined, and necessary adjustments made, by the legislature after each ten-year census. Unfortunately, too many legislators have found the 1901 system advantageous and have stoutly refused to consider any changes. The most recent attempt at action was in 1939, when a reapportionment measure was introduced in the lower house of the legislature; it was defeated by a vote of 60 to 31.

As Dr. Hallie Farmer says in her monograph, *The Legislative Process in Alabama — Legislative Apportionment*: "The legislators, and they alone, have the power to reapportion. They not only have the power to reapportion: the constitution makes it their sworn duty to do so. Serious discrepancies in representation exist because the legislature of Alabama, in respect of legislative apportionment, has for 40 years ignored or defied the constitution which it is sworn to uphold. No excuses, no explanations, no protestations of patriotism should be allowed to gloss over this plain fact."

Alabama is not alone in this failing. As we shall show in subsequent articles, other Southern States have ancient and unfair systems of apportionment of which they can hardly be proud. Meanwhile, those States can hardly expect to enjoy the fruits of industrialization while they deny an equitable voice in state affairs to the people in industrial areas. Unless the South moves forward governmentally as well as economically, its rate of general progress will be held back.

Notes and Comments

At its general membership meeting of April 20, the New Orleans Committee on Race Relations voted to become a part of the Southern Regional Council. Details will be worked out by the Executive Committee and Steering Committee during May.

The Council extends a hearty welcome to the New Orleans Committee. It has an impressive record of achievement, and the new relationship between it and the Council promises to be a fruitful one. Officers of the New Orleans Committee are Rabbi Emil W. Leipziger, chairman; Dr. A. W. Dent, vice chairman; Mrs. Harry B. Kelleher, secretary; Dr. Harold N. Lee, treasurer; and Mrs. Irving H. Cohn, executive secretary.

Annual meeting of the Tennessee Division of SRC will be held at Nashville on Tuesday, May 17. The meeting will begin at 2 P.M. at the YMCA. Speakers will include the Rev. Jonathan N. Mitchell, of Nashville, who will talk on penal conditions in the State, and Dr. Michael Bent, Dean of the School of Medicine of Meharry Medical College, who will discuss the regional education plan as it affects Meharry. Mrs. Henry Havens, SRC field secretary, will review Council activities in the State. All members and friends of SRC in Tennessee are urged to be present.

The medium of radio has so far been little used in the South to teach better human relations. This is true at least partly because local groups are not alert to the possibilities of education by radio. The Houston Commission on Interracial Cooperation is one group that has not only seen the possibilities but has made use of them. Recently the Houston Commission joined with several other organizations in sponsoring a series of six broadcasts dealing with minority groups in our society. The series, entitled "The American Way," consisted of four recorded dramas and two live discussion groups, in which prominent local citizens of both races took part. Another series is being planned for the fall.

Other groups interested in sponsoring such a series on their local radio stations can get recorded broadcasts from the Institute for American Democracy in New York City.

The first full annual meeting of the Alabama Division of SRC was held at Alabama State College in Montgomery, February 22. The program included a discussion of Alabama prisons, led by Dr. Hallie Farmer, professor of government and history, Alabama State College for Women; public education, by Dr. C. P. Nelson, of the state Department of Education; Southern politics, by Mr. Osburn Zuber, journalist; and civil rights, by Mr. Arthur D. Shores, Birmingham attorney.

By-laws of the Division, which was organized last year, were adopted and officers for 1949 elected. Dr. A. D. Beittel, president of Talladega College, was re-elected chairman and Dr. H. C. Trenholm, president of Alabama State College, vice-chairman. The new secretary is Dr. Ruth T. Brett, of Tuskegee Institute, and Mr. Arthur D. Shores was elected treasurer.

NEW SOUTH

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To attain through research and action programs the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the region.